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CD NO.

COUNTRY Venezuela

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DATE DISTR. 26 MAY 1949

SUBJECT Policy of Arrest and Incarceration of  
Political Prisoners

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SUPPLEMENT TO  
REPORT NO.

25X1X6 The following information concerning the prison system in Venezuela is presented in view of the general concern over the continuing incarceration of political prisoners.

1. [REDACTED] following the revolutionary movement by military officers on 24 November 1948 after which a Military Junta was established, many imprisonments were made throughout the country and continue to be made up to the present time. Some few of those arrested have been released.

2001  
a conservative estimate of those now being held for political reasons is 4,000, of whom 800 are being held because of having engaged in political activities of various labor unions. It is the general policy of the government to accept at prison institutions, including the Carcel Modelo in Catia, Caracas, and the prison at San Juan de los Morros, individuals who were arrested on the orders of military officers with rank as low as that of lieutenant. The arrests are made first and the Ministry of Interior is notified of the reasons afterward, in most cases orally. Military officers have unquestionably in some instances taken advantage of these circumstances and have brought about the incarceration of personal enemies who are not dangerous from either a revolutionary or political point of view.

3. [REDACTED] prison wardens are under strict orders not to release anyone without the written orders of the Minister of Interior. Efforts have been made by relatives and friends of prisoners to obtain their release, and the Minister has had a general policy of stating that he would look into the matter and see what could be done. Considerable time has elapsed in many instances and there has appeared to be a lack of any kind of effort on the part of the Minister of Interior to investigate and determine why certain prisoners are being held.

4. Lt. Col. Carlos Delgado Chalbaud, President of the Military Junta, is more or less noncommittal on the subject of political prisoners. He is reported to have stated that his own father was in prison for 15 years and that prisoners "do not die". Source took this to mean that Delgado has no desire at present to take active steps to remedy the situation.

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